



## PLACER LEGACY

CONSERVING OUR LAND  
PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

SUMMER 2010

# Hidden Falls REGIONAL PARK EXPANSION

Placer County's park and recreation needs are growing, just as its population has been over the past two decades. In order to meet increased demand, Placer County recently approved plans to add 979 oak studded acres to the very popular Hidden Falls Regional Park.

Straddling Supervisorial Districts 2 and 5, County-owned Hidden Falls Regional Park is located at 7587 Mears Place, north of Mt. Vernon Road in the Garden Bar area. The park lies in close proximity to the cities of Auburn, Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln. Few passive recreational opportunities have existed in this area until recently.

The park properties, which were acquired through the Placer Legacy program and are preserved as a public open space for all County residents, offer a unique combination of recreational, scenic and habitat resources.

The site's unique characteristics provide the public with a heretofore rare opportunity to enjoy oak woodlands, canyonlands and stream corridors that previously have not been accessible to the public for over 150 years.

Acquisition of the 221-acre Didion Ranch and 979-acre Spears Ranch properties and their subsequent development as a regional County park, is a key step in implementing the Placer Legacy program. Placer Legacy identified a specific need for new, large-scale, passive recreation opportunities in proximity to the quickly urbanizing south county. Together, the two parcels comprise 1,200 acres of open space including three miles of Coon Creek.

Acquisitions of other properties in the area are being sought, including properties providing additional trail connections that could eventually connect the park to the Bear River.

The eastern 221 acres of Hidden Falls Regional Park opened in October 2006 and includes lands in Supervisorial District 5. It quickly became the County's most popular recreational venue. Seven miles of trails suitable for hiking, running, biking and horseback riding are currently available to the public. In addition, visitors can enjoy fishing, picnicking, wildlife viewing, photography and other passive recreational pursuits. Amenities at the Mears Place entrance include a paved, handicapped-accessible trail, picnic tables, equestrian staging area, and restrooms. Motorized

uses are not permitted.

The new addition to the Hidden Falls Regional Park consists of 979 acres of blue oak woodland (formerly known as the Spears Ranch) and traverses over two miles of Coon Creek. The properties' distinctive characteristics provide the public with a rare opportunity to enjoy oak woodlands, canyonlands, and stream corridors previously not accessible to the public for over 150 years.

With approvals for the expansion in place, improvement work is expected to start later this year.

Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery, representing District 5, says she supports the expansion because in conversations with constituents she repeatedly hears an identified, unfilled need for more multipurpose trails. "I am extremely pleased with the expansion since it will serve the needs of birders, bikers, runners, botanists, hikers and horseback riders as well as other Placer County residents who value open space and solitude," said Montgomery.

For the past 100 years, the Spears Ranch was used primarily for livestock grazing and firewood harvesting.

See **EXPANSION**, page 2



# OVERLOOK

*Dedicated at*

# Hidden Falls

## REGIONAL PARK



### DEFINITION CORNER: WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is the geographic drainage area where all water flows over or under the land on its way to a common point, such as a stream, river, lake, or ocean. The primary function of a watershed is to capture, store, and release water. Ridges define a watershed and serve as the topographic dividing line from which surface streams flow in two different directions.

## Eastern Placer CREEK SIGNS INSTALLED



While over 1,000 miles of rivers and streams flow through Placer County, most residents would be hard pressed to name and locate many of them. Now, Placer County's waterways are beginning to receive the recognition they deserve.

Eighty signs are being placed at 40 different creek crossings along 17 different waterways stretching from Auburn to Squaw and Martis valleys. Placer County received \$15,000 in Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 funding to assist with the effort.

The project involves placing blue-and-white metal signs with stream names, a uniform logo, and text that alerts travelers to fish habitat and proper garbage disposal.

Knowing the names of the streams people drive across every day engages citizens and visitors to gain a sense of ownership and protectiveness for the watershed. Signage will also help educate the public about their role in water quality and protection of critical fisheries habitat.

The County is currently working with CALTRANS to install watershed signs on several state highways. If approved, signs would be installed later this year.

A new observation deck that gives the public an easy, up-close view of Hidden Falls Regional Park's spectacular 30-foot waterfall is now open. County officials held a dedication ceremony for the 250-square-foot observation deck in mid-September 2009.

"This is just a phenomenal spot," District 5 Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery told more than 50 people at the dedication ceremony. The ceremony took place at the edge of a parking lot near the entrance, with the park's tree-studded hills as a backdrop.

Supervisor E.C. "Rocky" Rockholm addressed the crowd, noting that county employees and local taxpayers contributed approximately \$19,000 to the observation deck project through voluntary donations. Employees donated through the County's annual Combined Giving Campaign and taxpayer donations were made through property tax bills. A plaque has been placed at the entrance to the observation deck thanking donors for their generosity. Grant funding administered through

the California Resources Agency also contributed to the overlook project.

"I just want to thank everybody who participated in making this what it is," Supervisor Robert Weygandt said, emphasizing that the park will be preserved for public use in perpetuity.

In the past, Supervisor Weygandt has called Hidden Falls the "crown jewel" of the county's award-winning Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program. The park site was purchased in 2004 and opened to the public in October 2006.

Construction of the deck was a joint effort by the California Conservation Corps and the Parks and Grounds Division of the

County Facility Services Department. Design of the deck was undertaken by local firms, WJE Architects and Blackburn Consulting. Trails leading up to the falls have been constructed and maintained by volunteer groups, including the Sun City Lincoln Hills Hiking Club, Folsom Auburn Trail Riders Action Coalition and retailer REI.



### EXPANSION, *from page 1*

The property will soon be open to the public year-round, generally from sunrise through sunset. The park is intended for passive use and has been designed to minimize disturbance to the vegetative communities present onsite.

Plans call for approximately 14 miles of new multiple-use, natural-surface trails in addition to more than ten miles of existing ranch roads. Also planned are additional picnic areas, fishing locations, restroom facilities, and interpretive displays. In the long term, development of a nature and cultural education center at the existing ranch house or other location on the park site is likely. Various habitats on the property will also be restored and enhanced.

"I am extremely excited about the expansion of the Hidden Falls Regional Park. This popular and heavily used county amenity will be enlarged by over four times its current size. Citizens will be able to enjoy more trails and visit over 900 additional acres of our

gorgeous Placer County foothills," said Supervisor Robert Weygandt.

Vehicle access to the Garden Bar Road portion of the park would be provided in future phases as funding becomes available. In the short-term, the existing parking area off of Mears Place may be expanded from 50 to as many as 75 parking spaces for cars and from six to as many as 12 parking spaces for trucks and trailers.

Placer County has received over \$1.9 million in grant funding, primarily from the California River Parkways Grant Program, to assist with constructing the approximately \$4.6 million first phase of improvements on the Spears Ranch.

The park addition is tentatively scheduled to open for public use in mid-2011.

*This story and others from the Autumn '09 and Summer '10 editions of the Placer Legacy Newsletter edited and written with the help of Janet Voris.*



# PlacerGROWN TRACK TRENDS



PlacerGROWN's 15th annual Food & Farm Conference at Lincoln High School on Saturday, January 30th had something for everyone. In attendance at this year's heralded event were new farmers looking for tips on what to grow, families looking for tips about tax planning or farm succession, young adults looking for internship opportunities and community members with a growing resolve to eat locally. Over twenty-five workshops were offered, and Lynn Miller, Publisher of the Small Farms Journal and founder of the Small Farms Conservancy, delivered the keynote address.

PlacerGROWN presented its 2010 Farmer of the Year award to Bryan Kaminsky, owner of the Natural Trading Company in Newcastle and featured farmer in the Autumn 2009 edition of the Placer Legacy Newsletter. Bryan has farmed in Placer County for fifteen years and has recently closed escrow on an agricultural conservation easement. In a few short years, Bryan has created not only a place where his dream is taking shape, but has become a highly visible model for Placer County agriculture.

Keynote speaker Lynn Miller, who has traveled the country extensively through his work with the Small Farms Conservancy, spoke about agriculture in the context of man's longing for a sense of place.

Miller went on to say that pride of ownership, hard work and the rewards of feeding one's family and community resonate with farmers all over the country. But despite the upward trend in supporting local food and small farms, many challenges persist.

Miller issued a call for our country to increase the number of small farmers from 2 million to 10 million in the next ten years. To do so, workforce training, internships, mentoring programs and access to reasonably priced land are crucial according to Miller.

The 2010 Food & Farm Conference posted the highest number of attendees since its inception. This indicates a renewed passion for excellence and shared learning with a strong and vibrant community coming together to tackle the obstacles and celebrate the successes.

In addition to craft improvement workshops for producers, community members were invited to a special afternoon session. A producer panel explored the rewards and challenges

of raising grass-fed meat, pastured poultry, stone fruit and specialty products such as jams and dried fruit. Chef Laura Caballero, co-author of Placer County Real Food, demonstrated seasonal recipes from the cookbook, released in Spring of 2010.

As always, the most stimulating moments of the day were the conversations taking place throughout the classrooms, halls and over a delicious PlacerGROWN lunch. Passion for farming, the need to conserve natural resources, the desire to supply food for the community while earning a living wage, and the need for new and varied markets shows the intensity of the commitment to agriculture in Placer County and beyond.

For more information visit [www.PlacerGROWN.org](http://www.PlacerGROWN.org).

## Announces 2010 Farmer of the Year

Wayde Carroll Images

## PLACER COUNTY *and* SIERRA BUSINESS COUNCIL A LONG PARTNERSHIP

Sierra Business Council (SBC) has had a long-standing history with the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Preservation Program. Placer Legacy Newsletter writers sat down with the current President and former Placer Legacy Project Manager, Steven Frisch in order to get the back story on SBC's thoughts on the program as it approaches the ten year mark.

**PLACER COUNTY: What was SBC's first intersect with Placer Legacy?**

**STEVEN FRISCH:** Sierra Business Council started working with Placer County on the design of the Placer Legacy Program in 1997. During a strategic planning session the County began looking at the population and development trends occurring in Placer County. SBC Founding President, Lucy Blake, and Program Director, Tracy Grubbs, came to the table and provided the Supervisors with ideas from around the country about how other communities had managed the change they were seeing. SBC worked to raise funds through the Packard Foundation and other in-kind contributions amounting to \$400,000 in order to help the County afford a process to create the policies that would lead to smarter growth.

**PLACER COUNTY: Tell us about the citizens advisory committee and some of**

**their remarkable accomplishments.**

**STEVEN FRISCH:** In 2000 I started working for SBC and facilitated the Citizens Advisory Committee. Their convening and operations was a remarkable accomplishment. It had building proponents and developers, realtors, agriculture advocates, environmentalists – truly a diverse representation from Placer County. When they started working together as a group, they discovered that they shared really common values. At the end of the day we had the head of the building industry association and the head of the local Sierra Club chapter agreeing on the path forward and joining arms to advocate the same thing.

This is really a great example of planning done not just by the planners, but also by the people who actually live with the results of the policy, and had some hard choices to make about public spending. That was a true milestone.

**PLACER COUNTY: Can you speak to a few more milestones?**

**STEVEN FRISCH:** One of the most amazing milestones was facilitating and witnessing the public outreach workshops in 2000. Once SBC went around the county and asked people about what they valued in their communities, we found from whatever political persuasion or demographic background they came, when it came

to bedrock values, the vast majority of people, probably 90%, shared the same value of loving the landscape and place.

The next big milestone was doing the first actual project. While we were working on the implementation of the program we wanted to see how this was going to work on the ground. The first project took place on Aitken Ranch and the community began looking at it as a scenic amenity in addition to an opportunity to restore habitat and species. Being able to demonstrate the public/private partnership was extremely important. The taxpayers were not the predominant supporters, but instead, the marketplace supported good conservation.

**PLACER COUNTY: What sort of economic benefit do you see conservation-planning having for the County?**

**STEVEN FRISCH:** The Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP), when you think about it, is a pretty unprecedented document, not just for the Sierra Nevada, but also for the state and the country. This is not your typical habitat conservation plan under federal rules. It creates efficiency in the regulation process – it's unprecedented to put together a state Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), a federal Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting

process, and a state water quality control board permitting process. I think it's one of the unsung stories of Placer Legacy.

When all is said and done, this is going to create certainty, efficiency, and more predictability for the business community. Even though the PCCP is seen as an environmental initiative, the reality is that it is a huge economic benefit to the people of the County.

**PLACER COUNTY: What are some of the current challenges Placer Legacy must still overcome?**

**STEVEN FRISCH:** On the land protection side, clearly it would be better with a permanent funding source for the project. Really, the County has been able to achieve some remarkable successes without a dedicated funding source. The best example of that is the acquisition of Hidden Falls, Spears Ranch, and Didion. That corridor of recreational and open space is a truly remarkable place. You can stand in the Coon Creek bed and feel the granite of the Sierra Nevada and the pound of the waterfall in an oak woodland landscape and realize that this is the landscape of the Maidu, this is the landscape of early settlement in California, this is what our forebearers found when they came here.

For more information about Sierra Business Council, visit [www.sbcouncil.org](http://www.sbcouncil.org).





Swainson's Hawk

©Ron Wolf

THE FOLLOWING BIRDS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH VARIOUS TYPES OF OAK WOODLAND IN PLACER COUNTY AS INDICATED:

- **White-tailed Kite** – *Low foothills with valley or live oaks*
- **Cooper's Hawk** – *Nests in various habitats including riparian woodlands, foothill pine, oak woodlands and mixed conifer forests*
- **Swainson's Hawk** – *Nests in oaks or cottonwoods in or near riparian habitat*
- **Bald Eagle** (*Migrant in winter*) – *uses woodlands near water*
- **Loggerhead Shrike** – *Oak woodland savannah*
- **Modesto Song Sparrow** – *Valley oak/riparian*
- **Grasshopper Sparrow** – *Oak woodland savannah*

## CLOSING NATURAL TRADING CO. ESCROW

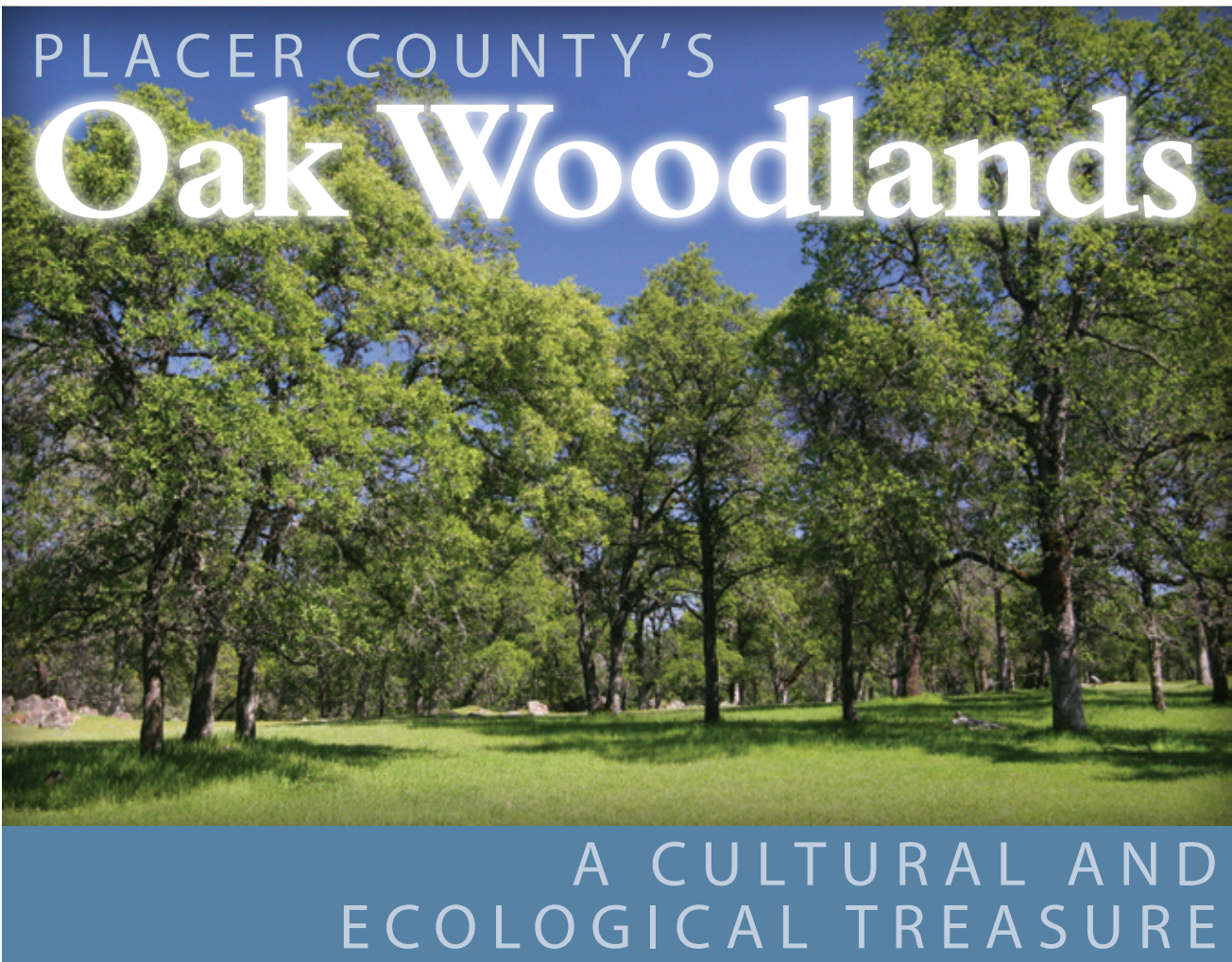
Placer Legacy finalized an agricultural conservation easement purchase on The Natural Trading Company farm, preserving the land for continued agricultural use. The easement marks the first time an active agricultural property has been placed under easement by the Placer Legacy program.

Located on 40 acres in the scenic foothills of Newcastle, this family-owned and operated farm grows fruits, vegetables, sunflower greens, wheatgrass and flowers produced without the use of synthetic or toxic chemical pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers, and without genetically modified or chemically treated seeds. The farm is certified by California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF).

In an effort to preserve the land for future generations, owner Bryan Kaminsky worked with Placer Legacy and the California Department of Conservation to establish an agricultural conservation easement on the farm property. The easement, finalized in February, prevents any use, splitting or development of the property that would significantly damage or impair the property or its agricultural values.

The County received funding under the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Conservancy Program for approximately half of the \$665,000 easement cost, in addition to a \$5,000 donation from Placer Land Trust.

[www.naturaltradingco.com](http://www.naturaltradingco.com)



## A CULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL TREASURE

By Richard Harris

In his book “Totem Salmon” Freeman House, co-founder of the Mattole Restoration Council describes the cultural and ecological significance of the Pacific salmon, once so abundant in the streams of California. He traces the values that society places on the salmon back to the native Californians who conducted ceremonies and enforced community rules aimed at conserving the fisheries. Native Californians similarly attributed high value to oak trees. Both salmon and oaks were important sources of food to the Indians. Consequently, favored fishing spots and oak trees that produced large acorn crops were protected.

Native Californian practices such as use of fire to stimulate oak regeneration, reduce competition with oaks from brush and enhance acorn gathering and hunting affected oak ecosystems, not just individual trees. The extent to which these practices had effects at the landscape scale is a subject of debate. There is no doubt that locally, in the vicinity of permanent settlements, oak landscapes on the order of hundreds of acres were managed by the native Californians for food production and cultural purposes.

In our present-day California, oak trees and oak communities have also achieved some degree of cultural importance, not primarily for the products they provide to people but for other reasons. Individual oak trees are valued for their beauty. Vegetation types dominated by oaks are considered critical wildlife habitat. Oak woodlands protect water quality in many watersheds that are sources of municipal water supplies.

As with the salmon, over the past few decades there has been increasing awareness of the values provided by oak trees and oak woodlands among a proportion of California's population. Curricula and school projects have been created to educate young Californians about these resources. Being among the informed, we may consider this to be a general phenomenon. In reality, it is doubtful that many Californians truly understand why it might be important

to “save the salmon” or conserve oak woodland.

Placer Legacy identifies conservation of Placer County oak woodlands as high priority. Recent land acquisitions in which Legacy has been a partner, such as Taylor Ranch and Spears Ranch, are primarily oak woodland. Residents of the county may question why public and private funds are being used to acquire oak woodland, which would appear to be so common. The rationale for acquiring or otherwise protecting oak woodland is complex, but to ensure continued public support it must be understood.

There are over twenty-three thousand acres of oak woodland in Placer County. It is not all the same however, and different areas are dominated by different species of oak. Most of us are familiar with the elegant, large oaks in the valley and lower foothills. Areas with this type of oak woodland are relatively rare in the county. From the perspective of conservation, protecting the remaining areas of large “valley” oaks is the highest priority because of their rarity. Replacement of such areas is simply not possible, at least within a human lifetime.

Most of the county has oak woodland that is denser, in many cases comprised of smaller trees that regenerated after fire or agricultural clearing. This kind of woodland may occupy hundreds or even thousands of acres. They are not rare, but their conservation is important for other reasons. Large, intact areas of oak woodland provide habitat for the common and uncommon wildlife that live in the county. For wildlife to persist, they require the physical habitat and food found in the oak woodland.

There are two general threats to the expanses of oak woodlands found in the county. First, there is the threat that they will be developed. Second, there is the threat of wild fire. Either event can result in the total loss of woodlands. In the case of development however, there are effects short of total loss that can result in significant impacts on wildlife habitat. These include the effects of human occupation within oak woodland that create changes in

vegetation, the introduction of exotic plants and animals (pets) and generally make the woodland less hospitable for wildlife. There are also effects at the landscape scale, termed “fragmentation” in which a large area of woodland is broken up into smaller areas. These smaller areas and the boundaries between them (typically roads, utility corridors and fence lines) may not be suitable for wildlife that require large territories to meet their life needs.

Conservation objectives for the extensive areas of oak woodlands generally focus on maintaining large, contiguous areas free from development. There is also an emphasis on management to reduce fire hazard in preserved areas. There are few areas in the county that still retain large woodland and consequently, that is where conservation initiatives will be proposed.

Native Californians had rules for conserving resources such as salmon and oak woodland. These rules were often embedded within their religious belief systems. The “First Salmon” ceremony was both a religious ceremony and a celebration of the yearly return of the salmon to the streams of northwest California. Families had ownership rights to specific oak trees and there were religion-based prohibitions on mistreating oaks and other culturally important plants and animals. For people in Placer County today, there are also rules and regulations for protecting oaks and oak woodlands. In the long run however, the conservation of oaks and the ecological and cultural values they provide will depend on public support for permanent protection. Building that support through enhancing the understanding of county residents about why oak woodland should be protected is a critical task for Placer Legacy.

*Richard R. Harris is currently working with Placer County on oak woodland management issues. He is a Registered Professional Forester with over 35 years of experience in environmental research, natural resource planning and management and forestry. He has a BS in Forestry, Masters in Landscape Architecture and Ph.D. in Wildland Resource Science, all from the University of California, Berkeley.*





Enjoy Waddle Ranch  
**NEW ACCESS TRAILS** ready for public



# Bruin Ranch

*and the*

# Bear River

## PROTECTION PROGRAM

**J**ust outside of Auburn hides 2,300 acres of rolling blue oak woodlands, annual grasslands and rangelands, seasonal wetlands, ponds, riparian corridors and four miles of Bear River access. This is Bruin Ranch, one of the largest intact oak woodland ranches in the Bear-Yuba foothills. This diverse habitat has been known to house many species of special concern such as the yellow-legged frog, the black rail and the Western pond turtle. The Placer Land Trust (PLT) and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) are working to purchase Bruin Ranch and protect it as a sustainable working ranch, public park and nature preserve.

The acquisition of Bruin Ranch is key to the creation of a unique public trail system connecting over 6,500 acres of protected lands in the Bear River watershed. Other recreation activities could include hunting, fishing, mountain biking, kayaking as well as bird and wildlife watching. Picturesque views of Mount Diablo, the Sutter Buttes, the Coast Range, the Central Valley and the Bear River canyon can be seen from Bald Rock Mountain on the property. Bruin Ranch will also help link existing protected lands into

a North-South wildlife corridor along Coon Creek, one of few creeks home to Placer County’s dwindling Chinook Salmon population.

Bruin Ranch property is in the heart of existing and proposed properties in PLT’s Bear River Watershed Protection Program. This area includes some of the last roadless corridors in western Placer County. The Bear River Watershed

real estate downturn has led to the lessening of development on open lands and opened up the market for land trusts. Bruin Ranch was recently listed on the market for \$33 million and zoned for the development of 900 homes. The price of Bruin Ranch has dropped significantly, enabling Placer Land Trust and the Trust for Public Land to put it under contract. PLT and TPL have only until the end of 2010 to raise funds to purchase the property. In addition to raising funds for acquisition of the property, PLT must raise an additional \$2 million from private and local sources to fund the stewardship and management of Bruin Ranch in perpetuity.

The Placer Land Trust will be hosting a series of Bruin Ranch dinners, hikes, cultural tours and wildflower walks over the next few months. Check the PLT website for more information and for links to NPR, KQED and Auburn Journal news articles on Bruin Ranch.

*For more information contact Jeff Darlington, Executive Director of the Placer Land Trust at [jeffd@placerlandtrust.org](mailto:jeffd@placerlandtrust.org).*

### HOW CAN I HELP?

Donations in support of the Bear River Protection Program and the protection of Bruin Ranch can be made to Placer Land Trust, a private 501c3 charitable organization dedicated to working with willing landowners and conservation partners to permanently protect natural and agricultural land in Placer County for future generations.

Protection Program is part of the Bear-Yuba Partnership, a program born in 2009 to create landscape-scale protection for the Sierra Nevada foothills in the Bear and Yuba river watersheds. The primary members of this partnership are the Placer Land Trust, Nevada County Land Trust and the Trust for Public Land.

Currently there is a unique window of opportunity to preserve open spaces in Placer County. The recent

Access to Waddle Ranch off Highway 267 in Martis Valley is currently open year-round for non-motorized recreation. Recently established trails have improved access to this diverse conservation area, which allow for various forms of recreation including hiking, trail running, mountain biking, bird watching, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. There are over five miles of trails on Waddle Ranch, with more great trails planned for the future such as one mentioned by John Svahn, Stewardship Director for the Truckee Donner Land Trust. “In the near future the Land Trust and the Army Corps of Engineers will partner on the construction of a new trail, beginning at the first gate on Martis Dam Road, entering Waddle Ranch at the southwest side of the property,” said Svahn.

This new trail will open up more of the preserved land where local wildlife including the Bald Eagles, Great Gray Owls, Sandhill Cranes, Goshawks, other waterfowl, as well as migrating birds can be seen. Sharing in the richness of Waddle Ranch are the Sierra Nevada Red Fox, Pine Marten, black bear, mule deer, coyotes and bobcats.

To best enjoy Waddle Ranch harmoniously with its wild inhabitants, Svahn suggests local residents use the northwest access off of Martis Dam Road (past the Alpine Meadows Campground, on the left side of the road). Svahn pointed out, “There is a map of the routes on the property located at this parking lot. You have to walk about a third of a mile down the road and across the dam to reach Waddle Ranch.” The walk, he says, is more than worth it.

Future improvements to Waddle Ranch will include a scenic loop around Beacon Hill, with construction beginning this spring. This new loop will cross through stunning Sugar Pines, Jeffrey Pines and other local flora. This loop will also provide great views of downtown Truckee. Please remember that while Waddle Ranch is dog friendly, dogs must remain on leashes in order to protect the local wildlife.





# Ten Years of PLACER LEGACY

June marks the ten year anniversary of the Placer Legacy Program. In April of 1998, the Placer County Board of Supervisors directed the Planning Department to prepare a program to implement the conservation goals and policies of the 1994 Placer County General Plan Policy Document. This program, now known as the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program, was adopted in June of 2000.

The purpose of the program is to protect a variety of open space resources in the county including biological resources, agriculture, scenic areas, public safety areas, community edges and buffers to provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities.

By adopting a comprehensive open space and agricultural conservation program, Placer County seeks to retain its unique natural heritage, minimize conflicts between conservation and economic development, and enhance the prosperity of current and future residents.

“I think Placer Legacy will have a greater positive impact on Placer County residents than any other single issue that has been before us (Placer County Board of Supervisors) in the last 10 years,” said Placer County Board of Supervisor, Robert Weygandt.

Placer Legacy is the result of hundreds of hours of planning and consideration by local residents who cared about the future of our county. A wide range of people have been involved including local government, farmers and ranchers, environmentalists, development interests and business people.

The Placer Legacy document has helped the County set priorities to protect the creeks, forests, lakes, farmland and recreational resources that contribute to our quality of life. This component of the program involves working with “willing-seller” property owners to ensure that the potential land acquisition meets the goals of the program as well as the needs of the property owners. To date, eleven properties totaling 2,727 acres have been conserved through acquisition or easement through the Placer Legacy program. The County partnered on five additional acquisitions totaling 4,086 acres.

“I think the flagship project of this program is Hidden Falls Regional Park,” said Placer County Board of Supervisor, Robert Weygandt. “I walked with a friend out there on a recent Saturday, and it was hard to find a parking place. Hidden Falls is a measure of hope for how all of this can work.”

Placer Legacy relies on a variety of funding sources including general fund revenues, development impact fees, gifts and donations, and grants from public and private sources. The County has also worked with a number of non-profit partners and state and federal agencies that have provided staff support and funding for programs, acquisitions, restoration projects and park and trail improvements. Over \$6 million in grants to assist in land transactions, restoration activities, biological surveys, and natural resource planning efforts has been secured since program inception.

Even though a significant amount of the program is focused on the land conservation objectives, Placer Legacy is also involved in a number of conservation-based planning efforts. Planning efforts include the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek Ecosystem Restoration Plan, the Dry Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan, Western Placer County Agricultural Land Assessment, and the Pleasant Grove/Curry Creek Ecosystem Restoration Plan.

Also completed under the Placer Legacy Program were the Dry Creek Greenway Regional Vision and Environmental Impact Report, a Squaw Creek Restoration Feasibility Study, the Rock Creek Restoration Plan, a Truckee River Corridor Access Plan, a habitat restoration project on Miner’s Ravine, and a waterfowl habitat restoration project on the Sundance Property in western Placer County.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF OPEN SPACE

- Provides tranquility amid the rush and bustle of life
- Maintains the natural environmental processes and balances, helping to ensure a high quality water supply
- Preserves our connection with the natural world
- Helps lessen pollution by absorbing contaminants from our air and water
- Preserves areas of scenic beauty, and protects the semi-rural character of outlying areas
- Preserves lands that are not suited for development
- Provides land for active and leisure recreation
- Provides habitat for birds, fish and other wildlife

## CONSERVATION EASEMENT TAX BENEFITS

There may be tax benefits to donating or selling a conservation easement on your property. In order to qualify for an income tax deduction, the easement must be a) permanent b) held by a qualified organization and c) serve a valid conservation purpose, meaning that the property must have natural, scenic, historic, scientific, recreational, or open space value.

*Interested in learning more? Placer Legacy will be producing a conservation easement brochure later this year.*

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PLACER COUNTY

## PLACER LEGACY

CONSERVING OUR LAND  
PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

Placer Legacy, adopted by the Placer County Board of Supervisors in June 2000, was created to implement the open space and conservation policies of the General Plan by meeting a number of objectives:

- **MAINTAIN** a viable agricultural segment of the economy
- **CONSERVE** natural features necessary for access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities
- **RETAIN** important scenic and historic areas
- **PRESERVE** the diversity of plant and animal communities
- **PROTECT** endangered and other special status plant and animal species
- **SEPARATE** urban areas into distinct communities

To find out more about Placer Legacy, please contact the Placer County Planning Department at 530-745-3000. You can also learn more by visiting us at [www.placer.ca.gov/placerlegacy](http://www.placer.ca.gov/placerlegacy) or via email at [legacy@placer.ca.gov](mailto:legacy@placer.ca.gov).

